

## RESPONDING TO HATE VICTIMISATION THROUGH COMMUNITY MEDIATION



### The research project

- Observations and interviews:
  - 15 observations
  - 20 interviews with mediators and RJ practitioners
  - Interviewed ten complainant victims
  - Two case studies

### Introduction

- Hate Crimes Project, Southwark Mediation Centre
- 10 years over 700 cases referred
- Cases referred by police, housing officers, anti-social behaviour units, schools/colleges, self referrals

### Aims of mediation

- Discuss *what* has happened
- Explore *why* the incidents have occurred
- Allow time for participants to explain how the conflict has affected them
- To facilitate how they might best go about *resolving* the conflict and *repair* the harms that it has caused
- *Prevent* future incidents from occurring

### Case Study One: Mr V

- Verbal abuse started, "AIDS Spreader" spray painted on front door, spat in face, car keyed, drinks poured onto head in garden, pushed over whilst on crutches
- Abuse lasted 18 months

### Case Study 1

- "... it's almost **soul destroying** for me because it took away everything I had and am as a person... it reached the stage where I was **frightened to go out** of my home. I used to sit in here in the dark because I didn't want anyone to know I was in because I was frightened that if they knew I was in that they would do something. "

## Case Study 1

- *"I know that one of the things that [Mr X] automatically presumed was that all gay men are also paedophiles... I think that was one of the issues and once all those issues were put to him in sensible conversation whilst he's not going to change his opinion totally I think it led to him realising that everything was not as black or white."*

## Emotional benefits of mediation

- Just being able to take part
- And being able to explain to the other party how they felt
- Feelings of fear, anxiety and anger were reduced immediately after mediation.

## Prevention of future incidents

- *"After the mediation process I was initially still afraid of being attacked or you know spat on but as each day went past you grow more in confidence that nothing is going to happen to you... and I felt well supported at that time as the mediation process had taken place "*

## Hate crime as one part of an inter-personal conflict

- Some cases are complex and involve multifarious relationships
- Both complainant victim and accused perpetrator act as perpetrator and victim at different times of the conflict

## he said... she said....

- Complaints and counter complaints
- Issue of noise often central
- Other routine activities such as children playing, rubbish being left out, smells from cooking food
- Grievances escalate to personal confrontation
- As conflict escalates further one or both parties engage in hate abuse

## Case Study Two: Mr J

- Homophobic intimidation?
- Verbal abuse
- Neighbours: "We don't like people like you"
- Mr J: "Old witch"
- Other neighbours become embroiled in the conflict

### Case Study Two: Mr J

- Mr J: "we understand each other much better".
- Mrs A: *"Each and every person in this world is an individual... He's found out how we feel and we've found out how he feels."*

### Conclusion

